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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Mr. Paulhus is of French descent, not Metis. He is married to a Metis and has lived most of his life in a Metis community.
 - Mr. Paulhus was born in Manitoba in 1908 of French Canadian parents. Moved to Saskatchewan when 15 years of age and later married a Metis woman. Lived in the Duck Lake/Batoche area for a number of years.
 - Riel Rebellion: the causes, the battles.
 - Views of Riel and Dumont.
 - Involvement of narrator's in-laws - the Touronds.
- Carol: You were born in Manitoba in 1908 and when did you come to Saskatchewan? Just approximately.

Fred: 1923 I came to Duck Lake.

Carol: With your...

Fred: With my father.

Carol: With your father. You came to Duck Lake and how long have you lived in Prince Albert?

Fred: Well, I came to Duck Lake and then from Duck Lake I got married and I moved to Batoche. And I farmed in that district for seven years. From 1940 to the time we moved to Prince Albert. Seven years.

Carol: And then you moved to Prince Albert in 1947. Is that when you retired in 1947?

Fred: No, I have been plumbing in Prince Albert. This is what the time I spent in Batoche. I was in with my father-in-law; we had store there, a post office. My father-in-law, he had the post office for 26 years. And then we had it for seven years.

Carol: And were your parents both Metis?

Fred: Yeah, not my parents, my father-in-law.

Carol: Oh, your father-in-law, not you?

Fred: No. And I farmed in that district for seven years and in the store and post office. People used to come into the post office there and we would sit there and we would talk about different things, the Rebellions and all that.

Carol: You yourself, you are French French?

Fred: French, yeah. I am not French, I am Canadian. I am not French from France.

Carol: But you are not Metis?

Fred: No.

Carol: Okay.

Fred: And that is how I heard about the way the Rebellion started, from on my wife's relations side. Which they were involved in it.

Carol: What is her name?

Fred: Tourond. When they had the first trouble started in Fish Creek. They were surveying the land out there. The one or two came in from Winnipeg, they immigrated into Saskatchewan. They squatted at Fish Creek. That was before they surveyed the land; they squatted at Fish Creek.

Carol: Before they surveyed the land?

Fred: Yeah. And they must have been there quite a few years because they came in there with oxen carts from Winnipeg. They didn't come by train. And when they squatted down there, they stayed there for a few years because when the government started surveying the land down there, those people, the Touronds, got together and they asked these engineers to write to the government which was Mr. Macdonald so they could not

have the land they were on. Mr. Macdonald said, "No, you have to move. We are surveying. Some immigrants are coming." So, they asked him quite a few times and they wrote to the government about it but they didn't write them what the Touronds asked them, what the people in there that was squatted asked them. They wrote them that the Metis didn't want to move. This is when the trouble started. The government sent an army to push them away. They were not asking for trouble, they were asking for that piece of land - to stay on the land that they came on when they came from the Red River. Because they had the same trouble down there, that is why they moved away. And they always blame Riel for the Rebellion but they got Riel to come in. Dumont went and got Riel to come in - like the people was talking about when I was in the store. I was not involved in it, but what they were talking to themselves - that they sent for Riel. Dumont, Gabriel Dumont went and got Riel so that he could correspond with the government because he was an educated man - so that they could have that land. But the first thing they knew, the army was coming.

Carol: Who was it that told you all this? This was your father-in-law?

Fred: No, that is what we heard in the store, when the people come in the store and talk about it.

Carol: The old people that came in the store?

Fred: Yeah, it was the people that fought the Rebellion that come in the store. That is what they were telling us.

Carol: Who were those people that told you? Do you remember their names?

Fred: Well, that is what it is. There were so many of them you know. These guys that is in that red book I've got here. Some of their names is in there.

Carol: Can you remember the ones that talked - the names of the ones that talked the most?

Fred: There was Frank Tourond, his mother - when she died she was 100 years old - she went through the Rebellion. I got a story to tell you on her. And there was Laplante, I forgot all their names now. There is quite a few of them that fought the Rebellion. They used to get together in the store and talk the old days, what happened and all that. And they were saying there, in those days, lots of times they would repeat it. They said, "The government promised us to give us a piece of land for every children we have," as long as they were to flow south - the flow of the South Saskatchewan River. And he said, "They never give us anything yet." ...from those people.

Carol: I see.

Fred: But, I don't think those people would not make stories.

They were telling what happened to them.

Carol: Right, okay

Fred: Anyway, when they, those, wrote to the government about it, the first thing they heard about it, that they were sending an army down to move them out of their land. So right away, they got organized. And the first meeting they were talking about it there is the store, the first meeting that they had, it was in St. Laurent. In one of her uncle's ...

Old Baptiste Boyer's house, the first meeting they had. To say - well if they are going to attack us, we'll defend ourselves. That is what they were talking about, those old people. So this is how it started and then when the first army came down, they say that it came from Clark Crossing. They came down Folk(?) River, the river in Folk(?) Valley. When they got down there, and then they had to fight; the first fight they had alongside the river was in Fish Creek. And the Touronds were involved in there then because they were there.

There was three of them. Two were killed in there, when they defend themselves. Because they figure, well, they want to push us out, we're not moving anymore, so they defend themselves. But they didn't start the Rebellion. All they asked was the engineers to ask the government if they could have that land. So, they never started the Rebellion. So, they pushed them out. Pardon me, they pushed the Touronds, they pushed them out. So this old lady I am talking about, Mrs. Tourond, she took a horse and buggy and the young kids in the buggy and she came to Batoche. They were pushing them to Batoche. And when they got as far as Gabriel's Crossing, somewhere around there, the army, they finally caught up to them and they took the buggy and horses and made them walk. So they stayed at Gabriel there, overnight I guess, something like that. Anyway, then the next morning she got up and she said, "I am going back and get my buggy and horses," that old lady. And they said, "Don't go. They will kill you." So she didn't listen to them, she went and she come back with her buggy and horses, she got them back. That old lady there, that is her (his wife's) grandma. And they give it back to her. The commander of the army never ordered the soldiers to do that, the soldiers did that on their own. So, this is what happened there. When they seen that the army gave back the buggy, the officer gave the buggy back, it make them a feeling that they started to understand that those people don't want to fight. They said they just wanted their rights. And when they got as far as Batoche, Riel said, "We are not going to fight anymore." That's what those people were telling us - Riel didn't want to fight for us, he just give us our salvation. But there were some Indians got involved with him and the Indians then, they wanted to fight. There was one Indian one time during the night climbed up that hill where Middleton was camped there by where the trenches are right now. That Indian got up the hill and he went and looked over the trenches and the army was sleeping, the English army, Middleton, all the men were

sleeping. So he came down and he told Riel. He said, "Let's go, we'll catch them. They are all sleeping right now." And Riel said, "No, no more fighting."

Carol: Did they talk much about Dumont?

Fred: Well Dumont, well Gabriel Dumont, they talk about him, what he done when he went on horseback to go and get Riel and all that and then, I didn't hear too much about Dumont but he was quite involved in it, him. More than Riel was. Riel, the way the people was talking about it - see they knew Riel when he was in Manitoba - he was a school teacher. And them people, those people like the Touronds and the Boyers and all that, they knew him from down there. And they asked him - that is

why they had faith in him. They come back because you know that Riel was elected to the parliament in Ottawa and the government never would accept him.

Carol: Right, right.

Fred: And the people elected him, the people from Manitoba, it was those people that immigrated to Saskatchewan.

Carol: Right.

Fred: And he went to the States then.

Carol: Do you know if Dumont could read and write? Do you know?

Fred: Oh, no. I don't think so. Well, I never heard anything because he could never write. Because he was a - what they used to call him - he was a buffalo hunter, he was a real horseback rider with buffalo.

Carol: But did people talk about him quite a bit?

Fred: Yeah, they talked about him quite a bit. But since I wasn't never paying much interest but him, I was more interested on her family's side, what they were telling us about it. With these people, these Tourond people and all them, they are not people that were looking for trouble, they were just - that is why they went away from Winnipeg. Because there was trouble down there. They left there because they wanted to get away from it. But they got involved in Saskatchewan.

Carol: Did people like Dumont?

Fred: Oh yeah. There was a lot of them, yeah. Well, I mean, you take any group when they have a leader, they will support him. He was a leader.

Carol: He was, eh?

Fred: Yeah, he was a leader. But more a leader than Riel was. More for war. They claimed that he was more a fighter than Riel.

Carol: Was Dumont religious do you know?

Fred: I don't know. But my mother-in-law, she walked from Fish Creek with a fellow, her little nephew, Andre Tourond, which is the man that fought in the First World War. Well, she carried him from Fish Creek to Batoche in her arms. He was about three years old. She carried him in her arms. She was

seventeen years old then. His dad was killed in the Rebellion then. They had a hard time those people. And then, after they got in Batoche there, the people were telling us, my father-in-law, all the young men about seventeen, sixteen years old like that, they all sent them with the women down to Bellevue called Bitimitunos (?) they called that. They sent all their women and the men there. And then these young men, they look after the women there. They sleep outside in the spring, made bonfire and sleep around the fire, no tent, nothing at all - in the open with babies in their arms, kids like that, outside. And they sent all the women over there and the men stayed in Batoche on the hill there. And my father-in-law he was one that had to go out there. They told him to go down there with his close friend (inaudible). And they stayed out there I don't know how long, they never mentioned how long but they were telling us about that. That was quite an adventure to go out and down that hill and I would like to take them down there to find out at least where this was - this was solid bush then - whereabouts they stayed overnight. I would have liked to see that.

Carol: How many people were killed?

Fred: Oh, I wouldn't know. I don't listen. Two Touronds were killed.

Mrs. Paulhus: They have a monument in Batoche Lake; they have all the names on there.

Fred: Yeah, all the names on there. I don't know how many were killed. But when I read the book, they say the Metis rebelled and I hear the story of these old people, I said, "No, you are wrong. Those people didn't rebel. They just asked the government for that piece of land. Why did the government turn around after that and give them their scrip?" If that was a river lot or a quarter section of land. After that, they give them that. And he promised that as long as the South Saskatchewan flows, they promised them that. The people repeat that often, they talk about that. But those old people, they will not ask the government in those days because they were scared. And they were scared to bring that back. They were scared maybe they were going to have more trouble. They kept that quiet and it died. But I see the generation today, they are trying to dish that out. And that is why I got all these books on...

Carol: So you think the government started it then?

Fred: It is not the government, it is those two men that surveyed the land that started it. Not the government.

Carol: The surveyors?

Fred: Yeah, they are the ones that started it. They don't need to blame Riel for it. To me, I don't believe that. The way I heard the story, those Touronds when they asked these two men and these two old boys, they talked to those two men by themselves. They were not talking about stories and what they were telling us you know. The old men and even the old lady. She was telling - we talked with her son there in the house. We were over there talking and we started to talk about what happened and she was telling us about it and then she used to name those guys. And if I had known that then, I would have taken those names down. She named those two men, she always named those two men for the trouble, this old lady. And I don't think that old lady was telling any lies because the way they were making their life those people, I mean, I don't think they were telling lies. That is why when I heard this story I thought to myself, "What the hell they are blaming the Metis for the Rebellion then?"

Carol: Did they talk about Batoche much?

Fred: Oh, well, those people you see, they did talk about Batoche but they talked more about Batoche than Fish Creek. But the first, the battle that was started in Fish Creek and it moved to Batoche, this is how it worked. Then at Batoche, then they had, supposed to be, another big fight but they didn't have a big fight. They had more fighting in Duck Lake. They had a fight at Duck Lake right on the reserve there. With - what was the name of that Indian - Turnbull? Sitting Bull was coming down but something happened in Duck Lake. They had a bigger fight down there than they had at Batoche. Because they were coming into Batoche. And they, you see, if the other army wouldn't have pushed the people from Fish Creek to Batoche, the battle would have been in Fish Creek but they pushed them in. That Middleton came from, this is why there is a place east of Batoche there, on the other side of the reserve, is called Middleton. Middleton, that is where he camped. Middleton came from Regina on the trail there. That troop was coming on a train and he camped at Middleton. That is how that place got the name by Middleton. And then he got to Batoche. See, the armies come in this way and there was one coming from, on the river by boat and they got off at Clark Crossing where the old people were then. The one army got off at Clark Crossing and there was one in Duck Lake watching - I forgot what they said - and there was Middleton coming in. They were coming from all sides. So, this is - if I would have known what I do today, I would have marked the names down of all these people because they named them by name.

Carol: What did they say about Riel?

Fred: Oh, they say Riel, well, they hang him and the people figure that Riel was innocent when they hanged him. You see, he was not the one that caused it. He was blamed for it but it was not his fault at all. Now, I heard and I see right now, now they are going to crown him. Yeah, an honor they want to give him now I heard. But it is too late now, he is dead but it is his relations. There is one of his nephews that are still living in Duck Lake, Riel. There is two of them there, two brothers. But I...

Carol: Well, what's this that you were saying about finding a - what was it you found on your landing?

Fred: You see, the place where they squatted at Fish Creek, I mean, they showed me the place where the people when they first - the Touronds came from Manitoba - where they squatted in Fish Creek. And just where the, right across east of the road where they squatted, I broke some land there. And on that land is a kind of a hole and there is a little bush in there. I broke that land. And in that little bush is where we found these bones are buried. About twenty feet long, just about twenty feet one side. And it is about four feet wide. That is all bones and old tin cans and all that stuff. So we figured that is where the army must have been camped. But they got marked on this road. But to me, I broke it and to me that is where they were camped. And the Touronds squatted right across the road from there. Everything where they marked it now and what I discovered, it seems to be not really the right place. Maybe we have got it wrong, I don't know but I found that myself breaking them but I never told anybody about it.

Carol: The old people that talked to you about the Rebellion, how did they feel about it? Were they angry at the government?

Fred: No, it wasn't the government, they were angry at those two guys, those two surveyors. They were more angry about these guys than at the government because these fellows...

Carol: But still the government came and sent in troops and...

Fred: Well, the government listened to those two men which he shouldn't, see. They shouldn't have listened to them, they

should have sent men down investigating before and they never did. This is what those people are saying. They were not angry about the government, they were angry about those two guys that reported the wrong thing. This is what all these old people always - they were not angry about Macdonald, they weren't angry about him. They were angry about those two guys that wrote and told them that they won't let them survey land and they - it would be nice if a guy could get ahold of those letters those two guys wrote. I would like to see those to know what they wrote on that, you know. But what those people was telling us, what they were saying there, you know, when they talked together. They told that, I never asked them anything. I never asked them questions about it. I just

listened to them. I had more fun listening to them and it was interesting - how it started and how it - I never asked them questions about this I just listened to them talk together and that is how I heard. I told myself, "Well, if that is the way it goes, why in the heck didn't the government send somebody and then inquire first." They could have done that. It is just as easy as sending two, three armies eh? (laughs) That was a big mistake they have done. But I don't, I don't blame the Metis for what happened in the Rebellion, the way I heard the old people say. And those old people, I don't think they would tell lies. Because those old people, you could trust those people. I know I had a store and those people used to come in, they had no money. We would give them groceries, give them goods, they were going out to dig up senega roots. Give them even a tent and everything, give them everything charged up. They come back and they say when they take their stuff, "We'll be back, we'll pay you every cent of it." Never marked it even. Never even give them a bill. They would come in and pay us. Those people, that is why when I hear them talk about what happened to them, I tell myself, "Those people, they are so conscientious, they wouldn't go out and tell lies and start trouble, that is for sure." When they left Winnipeg, they had trouble like that and they left just for that. They didn't want trouble.

Carol: Well, these surveyors then - that was at Fish Creek?

Fred: Yeah.

Carol: Well, what about Duck Lake? Because actually the...

Fred: Well, when the armies started to come from all directions, like these people were telling me. This is how - Dumont and all that - you know the fight but I don't know how they got the news going around but you know the fight, they drive around the country and everything, this is how the people

came in. So they, that's all, even the Indians from the States, they were on their way into it. The minute they - see it takes a long time. At that time, the people didn't move fast. It takes a long time for to come in. Like this Middleton, when he started from Regina on foot, you know, with horses, I mean how many days did it take from Regina to come to Batoche? Well, in that time, maybe Dumont went around and notified all those Indian chiefs in all the reserves and they got all ready and they came in. That is how they met them in Duck Lake, the way I can figure it out. They were coming in to help the people in Batoche.

Carol: Duck Lake happened before Batoche though.

Fred: No, it all happened at the same time.

Carol: Okay.

Fred: That is what they say. Because they were, they were trying to stop them there. You see, when the trouble started

in Batoche, there was a Fort Carlton. My father-in-law came from Winnipeg, Fort Carlton, fourteen years old. And the trouble started like that they all moved to Prince Albert. So, they were afraid of - I think - Sitting Bull they were afraid if he was to come in from the States. I think it was Sitting Bull, I heard the name Sitting Bull. But they, the battle they had at Duck Lake and Fish Creek, at Batoche, it might have been a few weeks or so difference. But it was all the same purpose.

Carol: Okay, good.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

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